



### **U.S. Marine Corps Sergeant Paula M. Payne**

Sergeant Paula M. Payne is a four-year veteran of the United States Marine Corps and is currently serving as part of the *Why We Serve* speakers program. She returned from assignment in Iraq in January 2007 and is speaking to groups around the country about her personal experiences with Operation Lioness.

Payne joined the Marine Corps in 2003 and was assigned as a Radio Operator to Communications Company, Headquarters Battalion and First Marine Division Camp at Pendleton, Calif. In September 2004, Payne deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom to Camp Blue Diamond, Ramadi, Iraq. Upon her return in March of 2005, Payne was nominated to participate in the Joint Task Force Exercise Training in support of the 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit. The training included preparing Marines for riot control, embassy attacks and evacuation procedures from hostile areas.

During her second deployment to Iraq, Payne supported Operation Lioness, an all female unit that dealt with female Iraqi citizens. She also served as a Syscon Watch Officer responsible for ensuring communication links to surrounding sites remained stable. In her spare time, Payne also taught fitness classes at Camp Chapel.

Payne was born Manilla, Philippines. Her decorations include the Marine Corps Good Conduct Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Iraq Campaign Medal, Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Sea Service Deployment Ribbon with a Bronze Star, a Letter of Accommodation and the Sharpshooter Rifleman Badge.